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RR RUEHBI RUEHLMC
DE RUEHLM #0852/01 1660321
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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6272
INFO RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1098
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0208
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 7191
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 5298
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 2204
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 7777
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 5437
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2130
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000852

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB/EPPD NSMITH-NISSLEY AND SCA/INS
DOL/ILAB FOR TINA MCCARTER
MCC FOR S. GROFF, D. TETER, D. NASSIRY AND E. BURKE
TREASURY FOR LESLIE HULL
GENEVA PASS USTR

FOR EEB ASSISTANT SECRETARY SULLIVAN FROM AMBASSADOR BLAKE

E.O 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [BEXP](#) [ETRD](#) [ELAB](#) [KSEP](#) [SENV](#) [AMGT](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA - NOMINATION OF MICROSOFT FOR CORPORATE
EXCELLENCE AWARD

REF: A) STATE 47222 B) COLOMBO 754

¶1. I am pleased to nominate Microsoft-Sri Lanka for the Secretary's Award for Corporate Excellence in the multinational enterprise category. While meeting all eligibility requirements for this award, Microsoft-Sri Lanka has demonstrated outstanding corporate citizenship by enabling reformed drug addicts to obtain better jobs through information and communication technology (IT) training. It has helped contribute to the advancement of Sri Lanka's scientific and technology policies by conducting seminars for developing IT-enhanced curricula and counseling students in their career paths. Microsoft-Sri Lanka has contributed to rule of law by sponsoring an intellectual property rights (IPR) training program for judicial officials.

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP: EXPANDING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AND
OBJECTIVES OF EX-DRUG ADDICTS

¶2. In 2005-06, Microsoft-Sri Lanka partnered with the Sri Lanka Anti Narcotics Association (SLANA) to attempt to integrate ex-drug users back into society, by providing them with IT skills to facilitate employability. Microsoft donated \$113,000 to help SLANA set up three centers and directly train 400 people. This project is designed to positively influence over 1,500 people over two years. The plan has already begun working. A 25-year old former heroin addict wrote that the program "made me realize that I could pursue numerous avenues...I further understood what I could do with the support of new technology." A 20-year old ex-drug user who completed the program wrote, "I realized that there is a world beyond drugs. [The program] exposed me to many things I could do in life. It also created a special interest in computers."

CONTRIBUTING TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL
POLICIES: CURRICULUM REDESIGN AND IT TRAINING; PROMOTING IT CAREER
OPPORTUNITIES

¶3. Sri Lanka has identified IT as a potential growth sector, and seeks to encourage its growth. In Sri Lanka, mainly upper-class urban residents have access to the Internet, while rural communities

are left without IT training or access - tools that are essential for economic advancement in today's world. In 2004-05, Microsoft-Sri Lanka provided a grant of \$110,000 to set up 12 telecenters island-wide, to enable rural youth to access IT and to receive training. Microsoft estimates that the grant has trained 3,500 young people, and affected the lives of an additional 10,000 people.

¶4. In 2006, Microsoft-Sri Lanka urged and coordinated with other IT companies, including IBM, HP, IDM, and Suntel, to contribute to the development of four rural IT projects. This practice has evolved into a Global Best Practice for Microsoft, which has adopted it in over a dozen countries within the past year.

¶5. Microsoft-Sri Lanka also identified the need to reduce "fear of technology" among Sri Lanka's teachers. The company, together with the Ministry of Education, launched the National Teacher PC Drive, aimed at enabling 50,000 teachers to own PCs. It provided several subsidies for this initiative, including provision of free training to any teacher who buys a PC, and free lesson plans. Approximately 6,900 teachers have received this training delivered by the company, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. This represents a total classroom size of approximately 332,000 students.

¶6. Microsoft-Sri Lanka co-sponsored with USAID/Sri Lanka a job fair in June 2007. The fair featured prominent Sri Lankan local and internationally based businesses, seminars on applying for jobs and where opportunities lie in the job market, and counseling services on how to interview and which technical fields are most appropriate for the skills of the students. One of the 900 student participants commented that this job fair provided him with more knowledge and practical experience about the job market than all of his years of education combined.

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CONTRIBUTING TO RULE OF LAW: JUDICIAL TRAINING IN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAWS

¶7. Microsoft-Sri Lanka partnered with the local American Chamber of Commerce in a multi-pronged intellectual property rights campaign. In addition to its non-publicized financial contributions to a public-awareness component of the campaign, Microsoft staff conducted training on Sri Lanka's Intellectual Property Act and the importance of IPR enforcement for judiciary staff who rule on intellectual property rights cases. One American Chamber of Commerce member reported a significant increase in the size of fines imposed on IPR violators following the training. Due to the success of this program, Microsoft executives have expressed interest in supporting continuing training programs within the court system. Additionally, the Embassy requested funding (Ref B) to support continuation of this program.

BLAKE